CLAIMS

1. A digital camera, comprising:

a housing;

a digital optical sensing apparatus mounted within said housing, said digital optical sensing apparatus sensing optical images;

a processor for controlling operation of said digital camera, said processor operating said digital camera in at least two modes of operation, including:

(a) a first mode of operation, wherein said digital optical sensing apparatus senses a biometric parameter of a user of said camera, said processor identifying said user from said biometric parameter; and

(b) a second mode of operation, wherein said digital optical sensing apparatus captures and records an image of an object of interest.

2. The digital camera of claim 1, wherein said biometric parameter is an iris of said user's eye.

3. The digital camera of claim 1,

further comprising a viewing window for viewing an image of said object of interest by said user;

wherein, in said first mode of operation, said digital optical sensing apparatus senses light representing said biometric parameter, said light entering said camera through said viewing window.

4. The digital camera of claim 1, wherein said processor further associates user identifying data with a recorded image of an object of interest, said user identifying data being obtained using said biometric parameter.

5. The digital camera of claim 1, wherein said processor further selectively enables at least one camera function responsive to identifying said user from said biometric parameter.

6. A digital camera, comprising:

a housing;

a biometric sensing apparatus for sensing a biometric parameter of a user of said digital camera;

a processor for controlling operation of said digital camera;

a memory, said memory storing biometric parameters associated with one or more potential users of said digital camera;

wherein said processor identifies a user of said camera by comparing data obtained from said biometric sensing apparatus with said biometric parameters associated with one or more potential users in said memory, and, responsive to identifying a user, associates user identifying information with a digital image captured by said digital camera.

7. The digital camera of claim 6, wherein said biometric parameter is an optically measured parameter.

8. The digital camera of claim 7, wherein said biometric parameter is an iris of said user's eye.

9. The digital camera of claim 7, wherein said optically measured biometric parameter is obtained by said digital camera using the same digital optical sensing apparatus that is used for obtaining images of objects of interest.

10. The digital camera of claim 9,

further comprising a viewing window for viewing an image of an object of interest by said user;

wherein said digital optical sensing apparatus senses light representing said optically measured biometric parameter, said light entering said camera through said viewing window.

11. The digital camera of claim 7,

further comprising a viewing window for viewing an image of an object of interest by said user;

wherein light representing said optically measured biometric parameter enters said camera through said viewing window, said light being sensed by a digital optical sensing apparatus within said camera..

12. The digital camera of claim 6, wherein said processor further selectively enables at least one camera function responsive to identifying said user from said biometric parameter.

13. A method of operating a digital camera, comprising the steps of:

obtaining a biometric measurement of a user with optical sensing apparatus of said digital camera;

identifying said user using said optical biometric measurement, said identifying step being performed automatically by said digital camera; and

capturing a digital image of an object of interest with said optical sensing apparatus.

14. The method of operating a digital camera of claim 13, wherein said biometric measurement is an image of an iris of said user's eye.

15. The method of operating a digital camera of claim 14,

wherein said step of obtaining a biometric measurement of a user comprises configuring said camera according to a first configuration, wherein light from said user's eye enters said camera through a viewing window, and is captured by said optical sensing apparatus; and

wherein said step of capturing a digital image of an object of interest comprises configuring said camera according to a second configuration, wherein light from said object of interest enters said camera through a path other than said viewing window and is captured by said optical sensing apparatus.

16. The method of operating a digital camera of claim 13, further comprising the step of:

recording information identifying said user, said information identifying said user being associated with said captured digital image, said information being recorded automatically by said digital camera.

17. The method of operating a digital camera of claim 13, further comprising the step of:

selectively enabling at least one camera function responsive to identifying said user from said optical biometric measurement.